

Message Text

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16

ACTION EA-06

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R 312136Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3795

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 25877

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: VN, VS, PFOR

SUBJECT: PRG CONTACTS WITH SVN EXILE FIGURE

1. SVN EXILE LEADER, HO THONG MINH, TOLD EMBOFF OCTOBER 30 THAT DINH BA THI, ACTING HEAD OF PRG DELEGATION FOR CELLE ST. CLOUD TALKS, TOGETHER WITH HIS DEPUTY, CALLED ON MINH OCTOBER 29 AT THEIR REQUEST. MINH COMMENTED THAT HE HAD RECENTLY AVOIDED THE PRG LEADERS BECAUSE HE FOUND THEM MORE "HARD-LINE" AND UNREALISTIC THAN DRV OFFICIALS. AS USUAL, THI WAS INTERESTED IN DISCUSSING THE EVOLUTION OF THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM, MINH DID NOT FIND THAT THI HAD ANY PARTICULARLY NEW POSITIONS OR REQUESTS FOR "THIRD FORCE" INITIATIVES. HE THEREFORE CONCLUDED THAT THI'S INITIATIVE REPRESENTED MERELY THE PRG DESIRE TO REMAIN IN CONTACT EVEN WITH THOSE ELEMENTS OF THE "THIRD FORCE" WHO WERE NOT FRONTS FOR THE PRG.

2. MINH ASKED THI HOW FIRM WAS THE PRG RESOLVE NOT TO TALK WITH THE GVN SO LONG AS THIEU REMAINED PRESIDENT. THI SAID THAT THE PRG FIRMLY OPPOSED ANY CONTACTS WITH THIEU OR HIS REPRESENTATIVES SINCE IT WAS TOTALLY USELESS TO DEAL WITH SUCH AN UNRELIABLE LEADER. MINH ASKED WHAT THE PRG POSITION WOULD BE ON NEGOTIATIONS

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IF THIEU WERE TO LEAVE SAIGON, DELEGATING HIS FUNCTION

TO SOMEONE ELSE -- AS BAO DAI HAD DONE FOR DIEM. THIEU WOULD THEREBY BE ABLE TO RETURN TO SAIGON IF THE NEGOTIATIONS BROKE DOWN. MINH SPECULATED THAT VICE PRESIDENT HOUANG WAS TOO ILL TO ASSUME THE LEADERSHIP, BUT SENATE PRESIDENT TRAN VAN LAM COULD BECOME ACTING PRESIDENT. THI WAS OBVIOUSLY TAKEN UNAWARES AND HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS WHICH COVERED SUCH A HYPOTHETICAL SITUATION. ACCORDING TO MINH THI FINALLY SAID THAT MUCH WOULD DEPEND ON WHO WAS REALLY RUNNING THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT AND WHAT HIS POLICIES WOULD BE.

3. COMMENT. MINH IS OBVIOUSLY A SELF-SERVING REPORTER SINCE HE HOPES TO PARLAY HIS RELATIONS WITH VARIOUS SVN FACTIONS INTO A PROMINENT ROLE IN THE NCRC AS ONE OF THE "THIRD COMPONENT." HOWEVER, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE CONTACT WITH THI PASSED SOMEWHAT AS MINH PRESENTED IT -- WITH NO DOUBT SOME EMBELLISHMENTS MINH DESIGNED FOR HIS AMERICAN AUDIENCE. WE GATHER THAT PRG MAY BE INTENSIFYING ITS CONTACTS WITH SOME EXILE FIGURES HERE AS PART OF AN EFFORT TO PROFIT FROM PERTURBATIONS IN SAIGON.

STONE

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NNN

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